

Obama to appoint John Holdren as President's Science Adviser? This would be a great choice.

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Posted on [December 18, 2008](#) by [Rick Piltz](#)

It is being reported that President-elect Obama has picked John Holdren of Harvard University to serve as the President's Science Adviser and director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy. We have long had the highest regard for John Holdren and have considered him all along as the very best possible choice for this position. If he is appointed, we will have a strong and brilliant advocate in the White House on forging the necessary connection between climate science and climate change policymaking.

Post by Rick Piltz

Eli Kintisch, reporter for Science magazine, has [posted](#) on Science Insider ("Sources: John Holdren to be Nominated as Obama's Science Adviser): "Strong indications are that President-elect Barack Obama has picked physicist John Holdren to be the president's science adviser....Holdren had been planning to attend a staff meeting this morning with colleagues at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, where he heads the technology and science program. But instead, he flew today to Chicago to meet with the transition team and prepare for the announcement; initial plans are to release the official news of the appointment on a weekly radio program that Obama records and will be broadcast on Saturday. The transition office declined to comment."

Also see [this posting](#) by Andy Revkin on his New York Times DotEarth blog.

[John Holdren](#) is Professor of Environmental Policy at the Kennedy School of Government and in the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences at Harvard University. He is the [director](#) of the Woods Hole Research Center, and recently completed a term as board chairman of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Since I first worked with him in 1991 on a House Science, Space and Technology Committee hearing on technologies and strategies for addressing global warming, I have admired Dr. Holdren for his analysis and for his exceptional citizen-scientist ability to communicate with nonspecialists — something we need more of from the science community.

See our earlier posts:

[Feb. 24, 2008](#): John Holdren: US public opinion is near a tipping point on climate change despite deniers' strategy

In a February 18 interview at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Harvard Prof. John Holdren, outgoing AAAS board chairman, said "I really think we're close to a political tipping point in the United States on the climate change issue....I think the deniers are finally losing the battle and the discussion is now moving to solutions."

[Feb. 24, 2008](#): Harvard Prof. John Holdren on "Global Climate Disruption: What do we know, what should we do?"

"Global warming is a misnomer. It implies something gradual, uniform, and benign. What we're experiencing is none of these," says Prof. John Holdren, recently president and board chairman

of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. “We are already experiencing ‘dangerous anthropogenic interference’ with the climate system,” Holdren said. “The question we have now is whether we can avoid catastrophic interference.” Speaking at the Kennedy School of Government on November 6, 2007, Dr. Holdren said the disruption and its impacts have grown more widely than anyone ever expected a few years ago. “To fix the problem, society has only three options: mitigation, adaptation, and suffering. We’re already doing some of each, and will do more of all three.”

(This posting includes a link to an archived video of a talk on climate change given by Dr. Holdren at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government.)

Feb. 17, 2007: AAAS President John Holdren urges action on climate change, energy system, and sustainability

In his February 15 Presidential Address to the American Association for the Advancement of Science, “Science and Technology for Sustainable Well-Being,” Harvard Prof. John Holdren called on scientists and engineers to get personally involved in developing solutions and suggested that fundamental changes on a global scale are needed. In talking with reporters he reflected our concerns in noting the Bush administration’s “tendencies toward fact-averse governance” and cutback in support for climate change research in the past four years.

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